

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

**SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SPLIT PACKAGE POWER
AND ROTATIONAL BURN-IN OF A MICROELECTRONIC DEVICE**

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SPLIT PACKAGE POWER AND ROTATIONAL BURN-IN OF A MICROELECTRONIC DEVICE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to burn-in testing of a microelectronic device and, more specifically, to a system and method for rotational burn-in testing of a microelectronic device.

10 BACKGROUND

Manufacturers of microelectronic devices that contain integrated circuits ("IC's") typically use burn-in testing procedures on the microelectronic devices to test for latent failures that may occur in the IC. One standard testing regimen involves placing microelectronic devices into a burn-in chamber, raising the temperature of the
15 microelectronic devices, and then applying nominal or stress voltages to them. The voltages are usually between 1.0 – 2.0 times the normal operating voltage of the IC and the stress usually ranges between 3 - 100 hours.

Current microelectronic devices fit generally within an economical burn-in envelope. Burn-in temperature is adjusted by changing the ambient air temperature
20 and/or adjusting the microelectronic device toggle frequency to change the dynamic power. Unfortunately, high-voltage conditions tend to increase the problem of leakage power in the microelectronic devices. One method of dealing with this problem has been to decrease the toggle rate of the microelectronic devices and also to depopulate the heat chamber to keep within a total heat budget. However, there is no longer much room to

decrease the frequency of modern microelectronic devices. Moreover, depopulation does not address the problem of leakage in individual units that can go into thermal runaway.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements and which:

5 **Figure 1** is a schematic illustration of a conventional microelectronic device.

Figure 2 is a schematic illustration of split power planes in a substrate and corresponding splits in an integrated circuit in a microelectronic device according to one embodiment of the present invention.

10 **Figure 3** is a flow chart of one embodiment of an operational burn-in sequence for the integrated circuit shown in **Figure 2**.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Throughout the following description specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the invention. However, the invention may be practiced without these particulars. In other instances, well known elements have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present invention. 5 Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

The present invention provides a system and method for utilizing split power planes in a substrate and corresponding splits in an integrated circuit ("IC") in a microelectronic device to enable burn-in of parts of the IC in sequence (i.e., separately). 10 The split structure of the microelectronic device achieves the ability to separately power a portion of the IC during internal manufacture but to make the split invisible in the final application.

Unlike depopulation or full device rotational burn-in, each half of the IC has reduced power. This eases the individual power delivery and removal problem. For example, assume nominal parts of the IC are 100 watts and high leakage parts are 200 watts. In a conventional burn-in, the parts may be segregated so that the 100 watt parts go into a full heat chamber while the 200 watt parts go into a depopulated (e.g., half populated) heat chamber. Alternatively, the 200 watt parts may be placed into a full heat 15 chamber but with only half active at one time. These examples all have the same average power, but the individual power delivery and removal mechanisms have to be twice as efficient in the latter two cases. The half load case (i.e., where the 100 watt parts go into 20

a full heat chamber while the 200 watt parts go into a depopulated heat chamber) also incurs extra overhead for heat chamber load and unload.

However, if the microelectronic device was split into two pieces and a rotational burn-in was utilized, then for the 200 watt parts the individual power delivery and removal may be capped within the 100 watt envelope without incurring the overhead of extra loading and unloading into the heat chamber.

Referring now to Figure 1 there is shown a schematic illustration of a conventional microelectronic device 100. An active surface of an IC 110 is bonded directly to conductive traces on a substrate 120 using an array of minute solder bumps 130. As is illustrated in the embodiment of Figure 1, the substrate contains multiple conductive layers including ground (Vss) 132, 134, and 136 and power (Vss) 131, 133, and 135 planes. A pin or socket 140 is attached to a common power supply or signal generator (not shown in this view) and supplies power to the IC 110 using a circuit path 145 connected to the multiple conductive layers 131, 132, 133, etc. in the substrate 120. While at elevated temperatures (i.e., during burn-in), numerous test patterns and sequences are performed on the IC 110. Also, during burn-in different voltages can be applied for electrically stressing the IC 110 as is well known in the art. In this manner, the IC 110 is tested for electrical performance and circuit functioning.

Referring now to Figure 2 there is shown a schematic illustration of split power planes in a substrate and corresponding splits in an IC in a microelectronic device 200 according to one embodiment of the present invention. An IC 210 is provided which has thereon logic circuits and memory array circuits (not shown in this view). It should be appreciated that the IC 210 may be an analog device, a microprocessor, an application

The substrate 220 itself may be comprised of laminates such as FR-4, fiberglass or bismaleimide-triazine (BT) material, of coated aluminum, ceramic, or other suitable materials and multiple conductive layers including power (Vcc) planes 232, 234, and 236 and ground (Vss) planes 231, 233, 235, and 237 which are laminated or co-fired between the varied dielectric layers. In a departure from a conventional substrate, the substrate 220 of the embodiment illustrated by Figure 2 includes a break 240 in the multiple conductive layers 231, 232, 233, etc. that corresponds to the horizontal break 205 in the IC 210. The break 240 in the conductive power planes 231, 232, 233, etc., enables burn-in of one portion 250 of the IC 210 while leaving the portion 260 of the IC 210 that is not powered unaffected by the burn-in. Pins 270 and 280 are attached to corresponding power supplies or signal generators (not shown in this view) and supply power to each portion 250 and 260 of the IC 210 using circuit paths 272, 274, 282, and 284 which

transverse through the multiple conductive layers 231, 232, 233, etc. on each side of the break 240 in the substrate 220. In this manner, the microelectronic device 200 is designed so that the pins 270 and 280 can supply power to individual portions 250 and 260 of the IC 210 during a rotational burn-in (i.e., one side at a time). Thus, during burn-in the powered portion 250 of the IC 210 does not affect the portion 260 of the IC 210 that is not powered and vice versa. The IC 210 must be designed such that each side can function independently when in burn-in mode.

Referring now to Figure 3 there is shown a flow chart of one embodiment of an operational burn-in sequence 300 for the IC shown in Figure 2. In the operational burn-in sequence illustrated by Figure 3, there are two portions 250 and 260 of an IC 210 to burn-in separately. The first half of the operational burn-in sequence 300 is shown and designated as 305 and the second half of the operational burn-in sequence is shown and designated as 345. It should be appreciated, however, that this operational burn-in sequence may be used on an IC 210 with multiple portions to burn-in separately. The burn-in sequence begins on the first portion 250 of the microelectronic device 200 when the IC 210 is heated to the burn-in temperature and a test voltage is implemented (processing block 310). The first portion of the IC 210 is then initialized (processing block 320). At this point of the burn-in, a stress mode is activated putting the IC 210 in the desired configuration for stress. Toggle patterns are then applied to the first portion 250 of the IC 210 (processing block 330) for a designated time period during the burn-in. For example, a checkerboard pattern of alternating logic one and logic zero signals (usually 5 volts alternating with zero volts) are applied to the IC 210 as is well known in the art. After implementing the burn-in on the first portion 250 of the IC 210 (processing

block 340) the second portion 260 of the IC 210 is subjected to a test voltage (processing block 360). No pre-heat is required since this occurred during burn-in on the first portion 250. The second portion 260 of the IC 210 is then initialized (processing block 370) and the appropriate toggle patterns are applied (processing block 380). The operational burn-in sequence 300 is repeated as necessary. As indicated above, the total stress time for burn-in generally ranges from 3-100 hours for the IC 210. However, this time frame is flexible. Moreover, although the checkerboard pattern of alternating logic ones and logic zero signals is utilized in the embodiment illustrated by Figure 3, it should be appreciated that any toggle pattern may be employed (e.g., including all ones and all zeros, etc.).

Thus, a system and method for split package power and rotational burn-in of a microelectronic device has been described. Although the foregoing description and accompanying figures discuss and illustrate specific embodiments, it should be appreciated that the present invention is to be measured only in terms of the claims that follow.